



AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS  
CANBERRA

NEW ISSUE

Reference No. 6.69

6231-0  
NOON 4 AUGUST 1977

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INQUIRIES

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JOB VACANCIES, MAY 1977

MAIN FEATURES

- At the end of May 1977 there were an estimated 39,700 job vacancies in Australia.
- There were 18,500 vacancies for males (47 per cent of total vacancies) 8,100 for females (20 per cent) and 13,100 open to either males or females (33 per cent).
- 10,800 vacancies were in manufacturing industries (27 per cent) and 28,900 in other industries.

Introduction

In the Report of the Advisory Committee on Commonwealth Employment Service Statistics, issued in November 1973, it was suggested that the Australian Bureau of Statistics should assist the Department of Labor (as it then was) by participating in an appraisal of the Department's statistics on unemployment and job vacancies. Because of the importance of comprehensive and reliable vacancy statistics for framing general economic policy, the Committee strongly urged that the Bureau carry out quarterly job vacancy surveys.

2. In order to investigate the practicability of such surveys and the most suitable methodology, the ABS conducted a mail sample survey in March 1974. The survey was repeated in March of subsequent years and the results were published in bulletins Reference No. 6.49 and 6.58.

3. Experience with these annual surveys indicated that in order to reduce to a minimum the delay in collection of the data and publication of the results quarterly surveys would have to be designed for the collection of a limited amount of data by telephone from a relatively small sample of employers.

4. The first of the quarterly surveys was carried out in respect of vacancies-existing at 27 May 1977. These surveys will be conducted in February, May, August and November each year.

5. The small size of the sample (about 2,800 employers) has restricted the amount of detail that can be published. Estimates are provided, for each State and Territory, of the numbers of vacancies for males, for females, and for either males or females without preference, and vacancies in manufacturing and other industries, together with job vacancy rates.

Scope and Coverage

6. The survey covered vacancies in private employment, in Australian, State and local government employment, and in private hospitals. All vacancies for wage and salary earners were included except those:

- in the defence forces
- in agriculture
- in private households employing staff
- for waterside workers employed on a casual basis, and
- for employees of private employers (other than hospitals) not subject to payroll tax.

7. Included in the survey results are vacancies for all categories of employees, including managerial, full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary and seasonal employees; and adults, juniors, trainees, apprentices, cadets, etc. Excluded are vacancies about to be filled by persons already hired, by promotion or transfer of existing employees, or by employees returning from paid or unpaid leave or after industrial disputes. Also excluded are vacancies that were not immediately available for filling on the survey date, that is, those that became available after the specified date, and vacancies for work to be done under contract, such as by building sub-contractors, owner-drivers, etc.

8. Because of limitations in scope and coverage, survey results do not give estimates of the total number of job vacancies in Australia at the survey date.

Sample Design for Quarterly Surveys

9. Respondents included in the survey were



selected from lists of private and government employers stratified by State, industry and number of employees. Employers with 1,200 or more employees were fully enumerated and a sample was selected from the remainder of employers. The total number of employers in the survey was about 2,800.

### Definitions

10. A *job vacancy* was defined as a job immediately available for filling on the survey date and for which active steps were being taken by the employer to find or recruit an employee from outside the enterprise or authority in the particular State or Territory. Active steps to find or recruit an employee included efforts to fill vacancies by advertising, by factory notices, by notifying government or private employment agencies or trade unions and by contacting, interviewing or selecting applicants already registered with the enterprise or authority.

11. *Vacancies for males and females* are those jobs open to male or female applicants without preference.

12. The *job vacancy rate* is calculated by expressing the number of job vacancies as a percentage of the number of employees plus vacancies.

### Reliability of the estimates

13. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample of employers, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the information had been obtained from all employers. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of employers was included in the survey. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all employers had been included and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

14. Standard errors of estimates for May 1977 shown in this bulletin are less than 20 per cent except where indicated. Estimates with standard errors of 30 per cent and over are not shown. Approximate percentage standard errors of estimates of total vacancies for each State and Territory and for Australia are: New South Wales 7.9, Victoria 12.1, Queensland 13.1, South Australia 11.2, Western Australia 12.1, Tasmania 16.1, Northern Territory 27.1, Australian Capital Territory 5.2 and Australia 5.4. Thus there are, for example, about two chances in three that the true figure for the number of job vacancies shown for Australia for May 1977 is within the range 37,600 to 41,800 and about nineteen chances in twenty that this figure is within the range 35,400 to 44,000.

### Quarterly and Annual Survey Estimates

15. Owing to differences in sample size and survey methodology, and because of possible seasonal influences (see paragraph 16), comparisons with results of the annual job vacancy surveys conducted in March (some of which are shown in this publication) should be made with caution. The standard errors shown in paragraph 14 refer only to the quarterly survey estimates. Standard errors for the March 1976 survey were published in *Job Vacancies, March 1976* (Reference No. 6.49). The March 1976 and preliminary March 1977 estimates shown herein have standard errors not greater than 20 per cent except where indicated. The March 1977 estimates are based on 97 per cent of the total survey returns and are therefore subject to revision. Final and more detailed estimates will be published as soon as possible in *Job Vacancies, March 1977* (Reference No. 6.49).

### Seasonal Factors

16. Comparison of job vacancy figures at different dates may be affected by seasonal influences. This should be kept in mind when comparing estimates for May 1977 with those obtained from the March 1977 annual survey. Seasonal adjustment of the quarterly series will not be possible for some considerable time.

### Comparability with Commonwealth Employment Service Statistics

17. For a number of reasons the estimates obtained from the surveys differ from the number of vacancies registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). The principal reason is that, because notification of vacancies is voluntary, many vacancies are not registered with the CES. Other reasons are:

- (a) the survey estimates relate to vacancies immediately available for filling on the survey date, whereas the CES statistics relate to vacancies which were unfilled at the Friday nearest the end of the month and which employers claimed could be filled if labour were supplied immediately or within the following month.
- (b) the coverage of the job vacancy surveys is somewhat restricted (see paragraphs 6–8) and the results are subject to sampling variability (See paragraphs 13 and 14).
- (c) the CES figures may include some vacancies already filled or cancelled by the date at which the figures are compiled, but about which the CES may not have been notified.



## Related Publications

All publications produced by the ABS are listed in  
*Publications of the Australian Bureau of Statistics*  
 (Reference No. 1.8).

NOTE: Any discrepancies between totals and sums of  
 components in tables are due to rounding.

R.J. CAMERON  
 Australian Statistician

## JOB VACANCIES AND JOB VACANCY RATES (a)

Month	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Australia	
JOB VACANCIES										
	Number ('000)									Per cent of total
For males —										
March 1976	8.2	10.0	3.1	2.3	2.5	(f)1.0	*	(f)0.3	27.8	54.8
March 1977 (b)	8.1	11.0	2.8	1.7	2.5	0.9	0.3	0.3	27.5	55.6
May 1977 (c)	5.0	6.6	(f)2.1	(f)1.3	2.0	(f)0.9	*	*	18.5	46.6
For females —										
March 1976	(f)4.0	3.8	1.8	0.7	0.4	0.2	*	0.2	11.1	21.9
March 1977 (b)	3.0	2.6	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	7.9	16.0
May 1977 (c)	2.5	(f)3.5	(f)0.8	(f)0.4	(f)0.5	0.2	*	*	8.1	20.4
For males or females —										
March 1976	3.2	4.3	1.0	1.7	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.7	11.8	23.3
March 1977 (b)	3.4	4.3	1.7	1.2	0.8	0.5	0.3	1.8	14.1	28.5
May 1977 (c)	2.8	(f)4.7	1.7	1.1	0.4	(f)0.3	0.3	1.7	13.1	33.0
Total —										
March 1976	15.3	18.2	5.9	4.7	3.4	1.5	(f)0.8	1.1	50.8	100.0
March 1977 (b)	14.5	17.9	5.3	3.4	4.0	1.6	0.7	2.1	49.5	100.0
May 1977 (c)	10.3	14.8	4.6	2.9	2.9	1.4	(f)0.7	2.1	39.7	100.0
Manufacturing (d) —										
March 1976	5.0	6.5	1.3	1.6	0.9	0.3	(g)	(g)	15.7	30.9
March 1977 (b)	3.9	6.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	(g)	(g)	14.0	28.3
May 1977 (c)	3.5	4.8	*	0.7	0.6	*	(g)	(g)	10.8	27.2
Other industries (e) —										
March 1976	10.3	11.7	4.5	3.0	2.5	1.2	(g)	(g)	35.1	69.1
March 1977 (b)	10.6	11.4	4.3	2.3	3.0	1.1	(g)	(g)	35.5	71.7
May 1977 (c)	6.8	10.0	3.7	2.2	2.4	1.1	(g)	(g)	28.9	72.8
JOB VACANCY RATES (h) (per cent)										
March 1976	1.0	1.5	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.3	(f)3.1	1.4	1.2	
March 1977 (b)	1.0	1.6	1.0	0.8	1.2	1.4	2.4	2.9	1.2	
May 1977 (c)	0.7	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.1	(f)2.7	2.4	0.9	

(a) For definitions see paragraphs 10 to 12. (b) Preliminary. (c) See paragraphs 15 and 16. (d) Australian Standard Industrial Classification (ASIC) Division C. (e) ASIC Divisions A to L, excluding Division C (manufacturing), Sub-divisions 01, 02 (agriculture, etc.) and 94 (private households employing staff), and defence forces. (f) Standard error greater than 20 per cent but less than 30 per cent. See paragraph 14. (g) Not available. (h) The job vacancy rate is the number of vacancies expressed as a percentage of the number of employees plus vacancies.

\* Subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses.